

THE

# Harbinger of Light.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM  
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

*"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."*

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THERE is a widespread tendency in the public mind to assume that modern Spiritualism is dependant for its existence on the physical phenomena pertaining to it, and if these phenomena can be paralleled by human ingenuity, the whole structure falls to the ground. Although Christians fall in with this idea it is essentially a materialistic one, for as spirit and soul are to the physical body, so are the principles and philosophy of Spiritualism to the physical manifestations of it, they are the indestructible part which by its inherent vitality survives the physical and lives on untarnished by the action of time. Hence as we have in time past affirmed the speaker and teacher have a larger and more important mission to perform than the purely physical medium. Physical phenomena when unaccompanied by intelligence simply appeal to the faculty of wonder, exciting speculation as to their origin, and suggesting in some instances a supermundane source, but even where this is the case the presentation of counterfeit manifestations so nearly resembling the real, as in some instances to defy detection, shakes the faith of believers in the supermundane and lands them again on the cold shores of materialism.

Physical manifestations of a higher order are usually accompanied with evidences of a controlling intelligence outside the medium, which speaks or writes as the case may be, and explains when necessary the mode and object of the phenomena. A notable instance of which is recorded in another column under the heading "Slate Writing Extraordinary." The mediumship of Charles Foster was particularly illustrative of an outside intelligence, communications being written and spoken by him professedly from the departed spirit friends of investigators and proving in most instances their identity. Then again there are numerous mediums whose physical

organisations are controlled by what invariably profess to be disembodied spirits, and where the control is thorough, usually succeed in satisfying their questioners that they are what they profess to be. We have a good and accessible illustration of this class of manifestation in Mrs. Fielden of this city, who has been the means of convincing many sceptics. But with all the direct and manifest good resulting from these evidences, the influence is limited and of little value in itself unless it leads to a study and application of the religious philosophy of Spiritualism. Of what avail is it for a man to know that spirits can and do act upon matter or communicate with earth, unless that knowledge opens his mind to the fact that he is an immortal being, that he is sowing here for the reaping hereafter. It is only those minds prepared to appreciate the deep significance of the phenomena, who can trace effects to causes and profit by the knowledge obtained making it a part of their lives in action who are really benefitted, and we venture to think that absolute physical phenomena has rarely if ever led directly to this result.

The apostle of Spiritualism who preaches its philosophy, with zeal, earnestness and power, though he may not convince many of the fact of spirit intercourse; exercises a powerful influence for good by bringing the minds of his audience in sympathy with those inherent principles of truth, which are characteristic of the harmonial philosophy. If he does no more than this, if not one of his hearers becomes an absolute convert to spiritualism he is still fulfilling one of its greatest missions, in emancipating the race from the thralldom of priestcraft, and encouraging free religious thought. But there can be no doubt that the diffusion of the principles of Spiritualism prepares the public mind for a more philosophical investigation of its facts, and here arises the natural demand for test and phenomenal media through whom the more direct and material evidences can be obtained. Where public mediums of good repute are available some basic fact or manifestations of Spiritual intelligence may be immediately procured, but where not so, the evidence may be ultimately obtained by earnest application in the course laid down by those who have travelled the uphill road from scepticism to conviction. The thoughtful reader who has watched the progress of modern Spiritu-

alism will be cognizant of the fact that nearly all the difficulties, discord, and exposures, real or pretended, have arisen out of disputed physical phenomena, phenomena which either would not stand scientific scrutiny or which could be so closely imitated by professional conjurers, aided by appropriate machinery, as to destroy faith in its Spiritual origin. All this has arisen from the subject being approached in an improper spirit, which would not be the case were the philosophy more widely known. The higher reasoning faculties of the mind are not readily reached through the organ of wonder, nor stimulated to healthy action by the morbidly sensational. It is only those things which appeal to the intuition or the intellect, which make a lasting impression upon the mind, and only those minds who are in states receptive that can appropriate spiritual truth. The ground must be prepared for the seed sowing, and the true preparation consists in weeding out the many erroneous ideas prevalent, and impregnating the ground with more truthful conceptions. The ethics of Spiritualism cannot be too freely spread abroad, for on the knowledge and appreciation of them rests its growth and progress.

#### SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

It seems to be a condition of earth life that man should grow amid conflicting influences. From the cradle to the grave, he has to contend with opposing forces which render his life at times a grievous burden, and has led many an one to exclaim; "Woe is me that ever I was born." It might be asked, however, whence arises this peculiarity of the earthly experience? Many answers have been given, but as it appears to us, there are only two conclusions which in any degree help to explain the difficulty. The first, is, man's limited knowledge; and the second, the want of confidence which prevails between man and man. The difficulties which we conceive must ever stand connected with development and growth, are not in any sense evils to be deplored. Neither is the first of the two causes referred to, viz. limited knowledge. But that there should prevail a want of confidence between man and man, wherefrom springs so many untoward influences, is matter of deep regret. The absence of that universal expression of brotherhood is in our opinion, the main cause of three-fourths of the misery which exists in the world. And the fact is realized more particularly in connection with the development and manifestations of Modern Spiritualism.

It is because of a suspicion, on the part of those who hear of these manifestations, that they are being deceived by their fellow men, that not merely is an absolute denial given to their recognition, but the charge of fraud is preferred; and, thus, while honest and intelligent investigators are pained at the treatment they receive, the phenomena are left in the hands of a few, while it is possible by the wise and candid application of the many, a more satisfactory solution might be reached, and the good of spiritualism more fully realized. For an intelligent, an honest man, to have the courage of his opinions in relation to this movement, indicates something more than a desire to cheat, it exhibits the purpose of a mind convinced of the sacredness of the course pursued, and a determination at all hazards, to scatter light on a subject of such vast importance as the higher life of man involves, among those who in return for the benefit conferred, may be mean enough to persecute if they had it in their power. Persecution in its mildest and most extreme forms, however, will not deter the enlightened spiritualist from pursuing his course. He has but one object in view, to help on the development of knowledge in its relation to man's physical and spiritual wellbeing; and, while doing this, he can but express the hope that the day may come, when with restored confidence, the confidence of brotherly love, all men shall unite to solve

the mystery of spiritual manifestations, and so enlarge their knowledge of the spiritual relations of mankind at large. We now ask our readers to give an intelligent consideration of the communications which follow, and which are in continuation of those which appeared in last month's "Harbinger."

How is it that man as to his spirit, needs to pass through so many circles of existence?

"We promised you an answer to this question, and will now proceed to give it. Progress implies growth, and growth and progress are the secret of a vitality, which keeps everything fresh and healthy. Like the ever rolling of the ocean wave, or the constant bubbling up of the stream from the spring, so life, existence, as it comes from God the Infinite, has a mission to perform, an object to secure. Growth is vitality; endless growth, is endless vitality. With this, however, is connected that progress through the varied circles which mark the growth and permanence of human spirit. It is thus God puts forth His Divine energy, and, in His members, exhibits the infinite vitality which characterizes His own incomprehensible being. Of Him we can only judge from the laws which he hath set in motion; whether He grows or not, who shall say? His creative power, to our finite comprehension, is infinite, both as regards its ability and its varied manifestations. But of this we feel confident, that He is everlastingly putting forth the element of life, in forms which ascend from the lowest to the highest; and yet no less a life from Himself, whatever the degree of attainment that manifested form of life may present. As I told you before, you recognise but the present form, and fail to realise the fact that that form is one of the endless stages of its growth—the growth of the life of God in form. All things comprehend God the Infinite; and it is because He is in all things, that growth, progress, and an endless succession of circles characterize the forming and reforming of the more palpable elements of an external and grosser consciousness, whereby the essence of life, when separated from God, attains an individuality, and as such can be united to its corresponding particles. When I say 'separated from God,' I mean as an exhibition of His otherwise incomprehensible existence. An outbirth of being, which but for this, must for ever have reposed in the bosom of the unknown and the unknowable."

If what you affirm be true, that immediately after the departure from the earth life state, we are to enter upon another and distinct circle of being, how does this affect in a general sense, the meeting of friends after death?

"I have already explained to you that throughout the universe of nature, there exists a sympathy which unites all things. These manifestations of sympathy while permanent, are varied in their manifestation and degree; and are regulated by the circumstances which characterize the stages of existence through which the life germ is passing. In every stage, there will linger a sympathetic feeling of interest in relation to the past, while the separation of individuals in the present by the hand of death, cannot destroy the interest which existed and has grown up between these forms of life while on the same plane of being. You are not to imagine, however, that in this respect, there will be no change when the same individuals have passed on to their new embodiment. You have already been told, that there are a vast variety of characteristics and stages of growth, even in the earth life, and that this fact will regulate position and association in the next. In very many instances, the sympathy which appeared to exist between individuals in the earth life will, when they proceed to the next, exist only as a memory; while in other instances, individuals will find themselves on the same plane of existence then, and united as individuals, much on the same principle as they were in the earth life. This reunion, or separation as the case may be, is governed by a law which is in perfect harmony with man's wellbeing and happiness; but it will be part of his education, to learn the basis on which a very different order of things prevails in his next stage of existence than that which he was subject to on the earth. And in connection with this, you will then find that, apparent friendships, and even earthly relationships, are not necessarily perma-



ment, or even calculated to excite a strong sympathy when this new stage is reached. The memory will remain, and for educational purposes work such results as shall contribute to aid the growth of the individual in his new circumstances and associations. Your question can be thus answered in words, but only realized in fact when the removal takes place to which it refers."

In connection with spirit intercourse, do you come to us from your present sphere, or, are you able to exert an influence from your position which reaches us here, and thus effects the object in view?

"Your question starts with a misconception. It is not necessary to stand side by side with our friends to influence their thoughts; consequently, it is not a question of being at a distance, or of approaching in the sense in which you indicate, that spiritual ideas and information may be imparted by us to you. The union of all spirit, as I have told you before, renders communion possible when the link of sympathy is intact. To spiritual beings such as we are when compared with your condition in the earth life, space and time are not, the spirit in its unfettered operations is not bound by the law of location such as you experience with your grosser surroundings; it is free to come and go, to act, and to influence others by the operation of thought; but always governed and regulated by the existence of the desire which either impels us, or leads you to draw your spirit friends to you; but, again, governed by another law of utility, of use, for to accomplish some useful end is always the condition of our subjection to your drawing, or to our desire to come to you. You will thus perceive that, there are very important conditions involved in the carrying out of spiritual intercourse and when these are understood, and properly attended to, then this intercourse will be placed upon a more satisfactory basis. In reply to your question then, understand that there is no limit to the penetration of spirit thought, when properly regulated and directed; and that wherever I may be, or any of your spirit friends may be, they can be reached, and they can reach you, quite irrespective of the earthly idea of time or space, provided the conditions regulating spiritual intercourse are complied with. It is when the spirit is in intense sympathy with the Great Author of its existence, that it seems absorbed, as it were, in heavenly contemplations; but without this sympathy, either as it regards the Infinite, or the finite, there can be no conscious union such as shall purify and strengthen the very fountain of being, and render the life more useful and happy. I would have you keep this in view as it lies at the very foundation of a true progression, and will be calculated to render your investigations into the theory of spiritual operations more satisfactory; freeing you from many false conclusions, and opening up the entire question of life in such a way, as to invest it with an hitherto unrecognised charm."

Will you please explain, in what way we are influenced, led, enabled to grow spiritually, and are protected by our Guardian Angel; if such an agency exists?

"The Guardian Angel is the combined influence which all lower forms of spiritual life require, and which is ever operative to effect the objects you refer to; for just as all things which exist are absolutely, and primarily dependent on the one Infinite fountain of life, so every successive link in the chain is dependent on the one above it, in a subordinate, or secondary degree."

Then is it not a fact that we all have a personal guardian attached to us, while in this life?

"Not in that direct sense in which you express it. Agents, and Agencies exist, and which are the links in the chain referred to; but these are the operative means appointed to aid growth, &c., in a general sense. The personal guardian, is the formulated idea of this absolute law of existence, and used by man on the earth, to enable him to grasp in the exercise of his more sensuous faculties, the fact which really exists. In the exercise of a wise, loving, and paternal government, you are all cared for; and no existing need of earth life shall be unprovided for at any time; while the realization of this supply, shall be more or less positive; just in propor-

tion to the condition of harmony which the spirit has attained in relation to the will of God as it is expressed in His many manifestations, and the operation of His wise and loving laws for man's ultimate growth into a more perfect state."

Can you tell me whether, as the result of growth, or necessary advancement of our friends in the life beyond, they will be likely to get out of the reach of our appeals to them, or be unable from circumstances, to respond to our communications?

"I am inclined to believe that it may be so; but even then, the influence which they exert is not lost to you, because, as I have said, the higher always contributes to the well-being of the lower; and thus the expression of sympathy on their part, if not so direct as it was before, is as certain and even more potent, flowing as it does through some more convenient channel to the recipient who benefits thereby. You must endeavour to cultivate a more general sympathy with nature at large; and in the results, you will realize a richer and more effective flow of strength to build up, and of comfort to cheer you amid all the walks of life, giving a fuller promise of the provision to be acquired when you pass over to the other side, and rise to a higher stage of existence."

There is a certain condition of earth life which prevails universally, both among mankind and other forms of nature beneath, even to the lowest, viz.: sex, the male and female: will you please inform me if similar conditions exist in the next and succeeding stages of being through which man passes. In other words: is sex in its two distinguishing characteristics permanent, so far as forms of intelligent life are concerned?

"Your question has relation to sex, that is, the two sides of nature, if I may so explain it. And since nature is built up on the basis of spirit, which is Divine, so sex must partake of the same character. These distinguishing characteristics of nature, however, assume different forms and offices in the varied circles through which spirit passes in its growth and development. It is supposed that the purpose of sex is to propagate the human race; that, however, is but the view which men on the earth take of it. Its object is of a far more sublime character, for thereby the entire universe is welded into one, and the positive and negative elements of being are sustained and perpetuated in the united and perfected form, which works in harmony with the conceptions of the Infinite source of all things, and which is at once the author of the sex principle, and the ever flowing stream of life which invigorates, and sustains the machinery of the universe. Your question has reference to spirit growth in its relation to these two constituent characteristics of nature; and resolves itself into this enquiry: as to whether sex is permanent in its relation to individuals? I answer yes, it is so, and it must be so, for otherwise the equilibrium of the universe would be disturbed. So far as I can learn, the underlying principle which manifests itself in the form which you call sex, must have characterized that indwelling spirit for ever, and will to all eternity. The identity and individuality of spirit is marked in this way, and the principle is not transmissible, but the expression of this principle, in the forms which individuals assume during their re-embodiment, rises in proportion as the higher states are attained; and in the condition which succeeds the earth state, the contrast is most marked. For just in proportion as the refining process of growth affects the form in which the spirit dwells, so does the sex principle participate in that accompanying elevation; and the union which results between what you would term men and women is characterized by a so much higher, and more sublime result which is peculiar to the advanced plain on which they now dwell. The operations of the divine Being, whom you call God, are twofold, centrifugal, and centripetal. There is a constant stream of outflow from Him, which at length, results in the constant stream of inflow towards Him in return. This is His creative attribute, and whereby all things grow from their elementary to their most perfected forms but distinctive all through, and yet inseparably united."

MARNIAS METI.

November 1878.

H.J.B.

## LOCAL SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATIONS.

## I.

LIFE is the motive power of the universe. Inert matter is dead. When the principle called life has passed out of the form it decays, or resolves itself into the primitive parts of which it is composed, again to be utilised in other forms of life; whilst the great motive-power the soul, drawn by the spirit of attraction, soars away to be associated for ever with those whom it resembles. According to this law the life hereafter is full of harmony, the spirit of peace and tranquility, which so few find on earth, render our condition Godlike. No longer borne hither and thither by the sway of passion, we climb steadily upward and onward, only retracing our steps when a weaker brother needs a helping hand; or when the children of men, who still tread the earth, attract us by sending forth magnetic outpourings from their higher nature. Highly sensitized as we are, this outpouring, emanating from a spirit in affinity with ourselves, is felt as you would feel the touch of a finger, and immediately arrests our attention.

Then with lightning speed we come, and answer this call to us, as messengers of the divine. In *this* way it is that your prayers are answered—for, "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." In *this* way is the hungry soul fed; in *this* way can ye drink of the pure springs that flow from the fountain of everlasting life, the greater the desire, the larger the supply—"without money and without price."

Good-night!

## II.

Man with a superficial knowledge of spiritual things, asserts that "God hath made man in His own image." Now, as all scientists allow that there are *varieties* of the human race, I would ask *how* this apparent anomaly is to be settled. Which variety has God created in his own image? The Mongolian or the Negro, the American Indian, or the Caucasian, or perchance the savage of Australia? Now a *triume* Deity, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will not solve the riddle—what then can be given in explanation? I fancy I hear one say: "Oh! but these inferior races are merely degenerations from the parent stock." If so, I would ask how do you account for this breach of law? In no other kingdom of nature is there anything analogous to it. The great spirit of the universe is a God of LAW. The fact is that *man* makes God after HIS own image, or spiritual conception. The *higher* that conception, the more enlightened is the man.

The *absolute truth* being given a certain number of men, the same number of Gods—your conception of Deity, and that of your next neighbour being as diverse as is mine and thine. Great truths are not to be measured as your morning's milk, poured into a jar or bowl and thereby shaped; THEY must give form to YOU to be of service. And for this reason is it, that truth is so unwillingly received. When minds are pliant, and the heart not puffed up, but, like a tractable child, are found amenable to reason—we come with pleasure, knowing that our labour will not be in vain.

I again say good night.

Castlemaine.

Communicated July 8th, 1878.

Great changes, as your lecturer\* told you last night will indeed soon take place in the opinion of the world on religious matters. Not much longer can religious fanaticism bolster up with specious arguments and politic concessions, the crumbling faiths derived from antiquity; not much longer can man's reason be hoodwinked and his mind forced to believe that the Lord and creator of all the universe, of the countless number of worlds and systems which fill all space, has indeed granted unto man his full revelation in a book, which, taking into consideration the number of its pages, contains more errors, blasphemy and obscenity than any other work now extant. Man will not much longer believe that the Great First Cause of all or even an estimable fraction of him (if such idea is possible to be conceived) was ever, or could ever, be incarnated in the body of a man, however perfect,

\* The lecturer referred to is Mrs. E. H. Britten.

much less in one who lived in semi-barbarous times and effected but comparatively little good, even by the exemplary life that he led. The world will begin to recognise soon that, if God be all good, He could never have created a being such as the devil, all bad, and totally incapable of improvement or progress of any kind and following out the arguments used by your lecturer on a previous occasion, it is easy to see that if there be no devil, there could have been no fall of man; if there was no fall of man, there could have been no such thing as original sin, man could never have so retrograded as to require the interposition of a divine mediator to make atonement to himself for the the short-comings of beings, which he himself has created. More especially will this be the case when they recognise the truth of "Universal Progress" and that therefore no such thing as everlasting punishment or eternal condemnation can exist, and that therefore man's never having been in danger of being lost, no such tremendous (or absurd, according to which point you view it from) sacrifice of Deity Himself can have ever been necessary.

When man recognises that his acts are just as subject to God's laws as nature herself is, that, in fact, he forms, whilst possessed of individuality still a portion of nature, the highest expression of the revelation of God through matter, he will learn also that his acts must be subject to the award of strict justice, and that no justice which is impartial (and partial justice cannot actually be justice at all) can ever sanction the remission of sins, the abrogation of the penalties naturally consequent upon wrong-doing, nor indeed the horrible and almost inconceivable doctrine of the punishment of the innocent for the guilty.

Man forms his ideal of God on the summit of his highest aspirations, his highest feelings of what is noblest and best in himself and his fellow men, he extends and intensifies these qualities till he makes of them the attributes of a Divinity whom he worships; but, as he himself ascends both the ladder of knowledge and the ladder of moral worth, his Deity receives from him added glories both in respect to his wisdom and his goodness. Thus, as he treads onward on the upward road, he constantly sees his ideal divinity before him, but, like the distant horizon, it is always shifting as the traveller advances. Sometimes, when shut in by steep mountains and overhanging heights, whose stupendous immensity overwhelms the solitary wayfarer on his road through life by its sublime grandeur, he thinks he is approaching the horizon, for these mountains are very near to him, and thus he thinks he is drawing very near to God. With beating heart, and sparkling eye, he scales the rugged heights, clambers over the highest summit—only to find spread out before his enraptured gaze fresh and beautiful countries, lying still before him, to which he must descend and continue still his pilgrimage.

Be thankful, therefore, if during some moments of your life, you stand upon the mount of transfiguration and feel indeed that you were very near to God; in such moments of exaltation your soul receives an impulse for good, the value of which you can hardly estimate; but let not even the ecstatic bliss of those inspired moments prevent your descending the mountain on the other side and continuing your labours in the fields below, helping to sow that grand harvest of spiritual truth, which shall indeed not be reaped in time but in eternity.

## PLANCHETTE COMMUNICATION.

CREATION is "thought forms" of God's own mind displayed in visible bodies. The law lies within those thought forms, and they are the breathings of the eternal Godhead, the displaying of his mighty power, which thou oh man art incapable to grasp in thy present condition of unfoldment.

All the worlds are but sparks of the Divine essence of God, and it will lead mankind into confusion and amaze, by endeavouring to determine what He is. Behold what surrounds you at present is not reality but a shadow, it passes away and only eternity is the substance, only those who have the spark of Divine love unfolded within them, have an idea of God, or comprehend partially His laws which dwell within Him and cannot be separated. As you unfold in this Divine love you will know by experience that God is a Spirit and



His nature is Love, Truth, Harmony and Wisdom but it is impossible for anyone to comprehend what is God. Therefore you behold the various opinions from various minds about God and His laws, which is shown by their undeveloped condition and various stages of growth, and it will always be so, until the whole creation of this growth is completed and stands in its fullest light, blooming forth in the Divine love of God. It will be ages and ages, before the work is complete, and you will all become workers in spirit to aid on those in the body to quicken progression. Our knowledge of the law leads us into obedience for we derive great joy thereby. Look upon an infant and see within it lies a deep lesson for you to reason upon. This is what we are, infants in spirit growth. We never dispute about God and His laws, for we know them, feel them, and realize them, as an infant does its mother. And now dear friends, allow us to give you one word from the spirit world. Keep your minds upon the Book of life by exercising your reason and faculties upon it, and you will then become convinced and satisfied that God is love, which time alone can unfold to you. Adieu.

Clear and steadily burns the flame

Within the watching tower,

Keep it bright and trim it well,

To be ready for that hour,

When your journey on earth will be past and gone,

And your forward journey but begun;

Then will your lamp shine like a gem

For ever and for ever.

Your mind's the lamp that lights you on,

While through the desert paths you roam,

And mind and soul unite in one.

CLARIBEL.

## To Correspondents.

*Communications for insertion in this Journal should be plainly written, and as concise as possible.*

### SPIRITUALISM IN TASMANIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—Since my last communication to *Harbinger*, we have had rather an excited controversy going on in the *Christian Witness*, a Hobart Town religious paper, (the most liberal unsectarian Christian organ that I have seen in the colonies) owing to a short article upon the "Atonement," from a writer signing himself "Investigator," attacking the orthodox view of it. The Rev. Mr. Bird, Independent minister, promptly replied, differing in some respects from "Investigator," but upon the whole he appeared to agree with him.

This brought down upon Mr. Bird the Rev. Mr. Butchers, Wesleyan minister, who appeared as the champion of the "Vicarious Sacrifice of Jesus," and so Mr. Bird and he then went at it hammer and tongs, "Investigator" now and again firing a shot in between. Several other letters appeared, backing up Mr. Butchers, but without the least attempt at argument. Although I think Mr. Butchers, take him altogether, was not to be despised, still he did not depend much upon his own resources, and had continually to fly to "authority," so Mr. Bird evidently had the advantage of him in this respect; and in one letter in particular I consider he treated the subject in a very able manner. I am sorry to say the "Christian Witness" has been obliged to give up. The editor offended several other bigots by allowing the liberal party to have a hearing, and many left off supporting it. One "good Christian," who is a local preacher, told a friend of mine that he would not now give the paper shelf room. How charitable. What a nice state of things we should have if these bigots had it all their own way! Yet they profess to be followers of Him who said, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." What mockery. I hope the time is not far distant when a paper like the "Christian Witness" will again be able to start and flourish, as all we want is "a fair field and no favor." These conserva-

tive Christians would have had some reason in complaining of the editor if he would not have allowed them to have their say, but such was by no means the case. We have had lately come amongst us from America an "Independent Minister," who speaks in glowing terms of Henry Ward Beecher, and as Mr. Beecher is a very liberal and progressive man—for instance, see what he says about "Eternal Punishment"—we ought to expect to find something good in Mr. Bennett. A short time since I sent the August number of present year of "Harbinger of Light" to an Independent minister. I have since been told that when he came to where "Layman" says something about the "Bible being burnt," that was quite enough for him, so he burnt the "Harbinger." Permit me, Sir, to say here that I do not approve of much of the language that "Layman" makes use of, I do not think it likely to do any good, and I know of several persons who have taken a prejudice against the "Harbinger" simply owing to some of his remarks, which I think would bear modifying a little.

The reverend gentleman last referred to also said that, "As I find the 'Harbinger' filled with blasphemies against what we Christians hold sacred, I intend to have it destroyed whenever it enters my house," and "as I find it is being sent to some friends that attend my churches, I shall send them papers and tracts, giving them other light upon the subject of Spiritualism."

These Christian ministers on the north-west coast of Tasmania seem to forget that they and their predecessors have had it all their own way for a great number of years, and could teach whatever they liked, but now that someone is circulating literature giving different views to their own, they do not like it at all. I would ask these reverend gentlemen, do Christian ministers never distribute their literature to any but members of their own churches? Of course they do. Then why not exercise a little more charity towards others? I have just heard of another minister "Primitive Methodist," when addressing a public meeting the other day, saying that he had received by post a paper with things in it very hard to believe. I suppose he referred to "Harbinger." Yet I daresay he could swallow without a question "Balaam and his ass." Well might Dr. Watson exclaim, "Oh, consistency, thou art a jewel!" scarcely to be found amongst the clergy. I think Mr. Varley, in visiting Tasmania, has done some good. He attacked unsparringly some of the social evils in one of our towns. One gentleman, I hear, is going to give up a brewery principally through his persuasion. Mr. V. seemed to be very much against the drink traffic. All honor to him for it, I say; for however much we may dislike his theology, we can agree with him in this. I do not believe in running down the clergy just for the sake of doing it. I like to speak of a man as I find him, no matter what his creed may be; and this is one reason why I take kindly to Spiritualism, because I find that Spiritualists, as a rule, can appreciate a man's worth independent of his creed. The attempt that many reverend gentlemen are making to explain away the phenomena of Spiritualism by the "Diabolical theory" amuses me. It appears to me just like the drowning man catching at a straw. The "conjuring theory" having failed them, in despair they fly to the Devil for refuge. But surely it will not take with thinking people, for if this be true, then perhaps all the spiritual manifestations recorded in the bible are of "diabolical origin," and if evil spirits are allowed to manifest themselves, I would ask these reverend gentlemen, why not good ones? The thing appears to me simply ridiculous and childish. I have just read Dr. J. F. Cook's "Monday Lectures." To me they are very uninteresting, nothing clear about them. The one on the "Nerves of the Soul" I think about the best in the book, and I see we have that in the "Spiritual Magazine." I am rather surprised, Mr. Editor, that all the spiritualistic literature that I have seen almost entirely ignores the existence of the "Ten Tribes" theory. I have read several of Mr. Hine's books. In taking everything literally I believe he has lost sight of the spiritual meaning of many of the texts he quotes in support of his theory. I believe the "Israel of God," as referred to in the Bible, to mean the good and true of every nation in the world. A distinguished dignitary of

the Church of England over here is very energetic in advocating England's identity. As for myself, I intend to wait patiently and see how it all turns out, and I would advise others to do the same, as it is likely at no very distant date we will be able to see for ourselves how much truth there is in Hine's theory.

In conclusion, although not a Spiritualist myself yet, I would strongly urge every Spiritualist to lead a consistent life, and then what matter the abuse from either the orthodox or materialistic side.

For forms of faith let graceless bigots fight,  
He can not be wrong whose life is in the right.

I am, Sir, yours truly.

Leven, 16th October.

FAIR PLAY.

### A RECANTATION.

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

A FEW years ago, in a small town in New South Wales, I gave a lecture on Popular Delusions. A considerable portion, and, as I conceived, the most important part, of this lecture, was devoted to modern spiritualism, which—with all the zeal and energy of which I was capable—I denounced, as one of the most glaring of popular delusions. I was tremendously applauded, my comments being considered quite oracular. But, in the cause of truth, I must confess that I knew scarcely more, perhaps less, about spiritualism than an average Chippewa Indian, my opinions being formed solely from seeing a few sneering remarks in newspapers and religious (so called) periodicals.

To those who watch the signs of the times, it will I think, be apparent that this style of declamation against spiritualism, or any new subject opposed to, or in any way interfering with time honoured prejudices, from pulpit and platform as well as in private discussion, is very prevalent, in fact almost the invariable rule. The deep things of spiritualism require that kind of study which like "the glorious heavens cannot be deep searched by saucy looks." Unfortunately, however, ignorance seems to be considered bliss, even frequently by those who presume to be leaders of public thought. As illustrations of this, I will give you verbatim two specimens of pulpit demonstration recently delivered in this neighbourhood. No I. With reference to spiritual manifestations:—"We know already quite enough about the after life, do not require any further information and therefore God will not send spirits to tell us." No II. With reference to the personal existence of his Satanic majesty:—"The devil, as really exists as you and I, he goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, he is found everywhere (in millions of places at the same moment) if you do not believe it, it is a proof that the devil is in you." This was the peroration, the quad erat demonstrandum of a Reverend gentleman's discourse. Can it be possible for inane bombast to exceed this?

W.C.B.

Daylesford, 15th Oct., 1878.

### HALF-AN-HOUR WITH DR. SLADE.

(BY OUR REPORTER.)

ABOUT three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, accompanied by a gentleman whom I shall call Mr. A—, I waited on Dr. Slade at the Shamrock, and was courteously granted a seance. Only we three were present, and as soon as we had examined the table Mr. A— sat at the right hand, and I opposite the doctor. The seance took place in the full daylight, the blinds being up. As soon as we had placed our hands on the table, we heard knocking underneath the space, about six inches square, which the hands covered on the table, and subsequently light tapping. Dr. Slade then said, "If you will write for us, please rap three times." Three distinct raps were made under the table, and apparently proceeding from the inside of the wood. Dr. Slade then held a slate and pencil partly under the leaf of the table, with his right hand, his left being on the table. Nothing came of this, so he placed the pencil on the table, and the slate on top of it, pressing it down with his arm. We immediately heard the noise of

writing, and on the slate being lifted up there was written in a round hand, "We will do all we can for you." The slates, which, with the pencils, were all minutely examined, were common school slates about 13in. by 9in., and the pencils were of the same thickness as the lead in a carpenter's pencil, and a quarter of an inch long. He then asked: "Will you write for the gentleman on my right?" The answer, written in the same hand, was, "Soon." This was not strictly in accordance with veracity, however, as although Mr. A— perseveringly held the slate to the table for some time, nothing was written on it. The doctor next took a pocket-slate, and, having placed a piece of pencil between the two small slates (6in. by 3in. each, hinged together) he closed the book, and held it in the air, about a foot above the table, with one hand, I holding the other end, and both our elbows resting on the table. We distinctly heard the writing, and, on the noise ceasing, I opened the slates, and found, written on both of the slates, the first four words being on the lower slate, and the remainder on the upper, and the line describing a correct semicircle, the following Latin words:—"Domine Deus, quia adduxisti me quis ego sum huiusque?" The last word was not in the line, but underneath the word "quis." The handwriting was different to the former, being very neat, all the letters properly formed, and no one letter joined to another. There was also written in a very different hand on the upper slate, and at right angles to the segment of the semicircle, "This slate is 'to' small." Dr. Slade said that the Latin writing was a good test, as he did not understand that language. Dr. Slade now held the slate and pencil with his right hand, part under the leaf of the table, and asked, "Is the gentleman opposite a medium?" The immediate reply was, "He is not, or can't be." He then took two of the large slates, placed a piece of pencil between, and he and I held the two slates, pressed together as before, above the table, and in full view of us all. The writing commenced at once, and when it was finished, we found the lower slate just filled with the following sentence, the signature ending the last line, and reaching the frame of the slate, where we found the pencil. The writing was very distinct, the lines perfectly straight, and the hand a female's. The following is the message:—"Spiritualism unites soul to soul—it cramps not a single mind, but gives free scope free thought, and free action—its teachings harmonise with Nature's laws and Nature's God—the religion of past credism must be lost and laid asleep in the misty graves of oblivion—and that Spiritualism, with its sweet and gentle strains, may vibrate in your hearts and souls for ever, is the wish of —." Mr A— took the slate and writing away as a memento at the close of the seance. Mr. A— and I now changed places, and the question was again put—"Is the gentleman opposite a medium?" The reply this time was (alluding to Mr. A—)—"He is." I next held the slate under the table with one hand, Dr. Slade having his arms folded in front of him. I heard writing going on, and, as soon as it finished, the slate was pushed out against my hand. This message being intended to close the correspondence, read—"We can't write any more now." Dr. Slade nevertheless held the slate under the table, and asked, "Please write one word more?" The result of this expressed dissatisfaction with the spiritual ultimatum, was, that a chair, which had been standing near the wall, and about six feet from Dr. Slade, was dashed against Mr. A—'s chair, three feet distance, with considerable force. Dr. Slade then said he would try a manifestation which he had not yet attempted, but which he considered possible, viz., raising a chair while a person sat in it. I cautiously inquired how high he supposed the chair would go, but I awaited the experiment. The doctor placed three fingers of his right hand on the back of my chair, and the chair immediately rose with me till my knees touched the table. It remained suspended for two seconds, and then came down very suddenly, the distance of a foot, to the floor. We then placed our hands on the table, and, after two or three attempts, it rose a foot from the ground, stayed there three seconds, and then came down with considerably greater force than gravitation would naturally cause, not as if it were let fall, but dashed down. This concluded the seance, and, after thanking Dr. Slade, I took my leave—*Bendigo Independent*, October 20.



## THE MASONIC HALL SEANCES.

THE Friday evening seances at the above hall are in creasing in interest. On the 15th ult., out of about forty names of spirits given by Mrs. Fielden, thirty-two were recognised and claimed by persons in the room. After which (by request) Dr. Mesmer gave an address on spirit life, describing the spheres connected with this world and the condition of spirits therein. The control alluded to the diversity of spheres or conditions of this life, which are as varied as those in the next, but that whilst circumstances here necessitated our following occupations uncongenial to us, we should in the other life be able to work in those conditions adapted to and in harmony with our tastes, and associate with those in affinity with ourselves. He described the purgatory of suicides, and showed the mistake which was made by those who thought by violently severing their connection with the body to improve their condition, deprecated capital punishment and advocated facilities for repentance and improvement of criminals in this life. Several questions were answered in a most satisfactory manner, at the conclusion of which an earnest and touching exhortation to purity of life, and a realization of spiritual presence was given by the control. There will be another seance next Friday.

## ANCIENT FAITHS.

NEXT to the Hindoos, the Egyptians were the most distinguished for their attention to religion. Great was the costliness and splendour of their temples; like that of the Jews they seemed to have been built as almost impregnable fortifications, having strong stone roofs, from which they might protect themselves against their enemies as the Jews defended themselves from the lofty walls that surrounded it the "STRONGHOLD OF ZION." Within the Egyptian Temples, hung a veil inwrought with gold, by which the Abytum was curtained off from the rest of the building.

Osiris was their principal male God. At first he seems to have been identified with the Sun; the great material visible supporter of all animal and vegetable life, and blessings; without which this existence upon earth would be impossible; "and who produces an annual resurrection of all nature." Isis was the counterpart of Osiris; Horus was their son and champion. The Egyptians believed that every spirit passed at death to Aminthe, the dim region of the under world; in which an account was solemnly taken by Osiris, of its actions and words. The object of this belief was to urge a motive for living a course of uprightness; the duties recognised towards the Gods, their neighbours and themselves; as may be gathered from the judgment scenes enacted at the great tribunal of Osiris. The spirit that presided over all the institutions of the Pharaohs, was stern, prohibitive, and despotic."

"Those who failed in the ordeal of judgment, incurred a dark succession of tremendous penalties. The hapless spirit was banished from the presence of Osiris, hurried back to earth by ministers of vengeance; to be incarnated in some animal of similar tastes and appetites." "Among the places of punishment, there is also described a place of fire torture, very similar to the Christian's hell."

"The human spirit who stood the various tests at the tribunal of Osiris, passed on through the joyous halls of Aaklu Elysium, where they are gradually purified," until they at length become so perfect that they lost all personality, and were absorbed into the Divine Nature.

The above is quite in harmony with the teachings of the Vedas, which represent souls "as emanations from the SUPREME SOUL of the universe, a portion of THE DIVINE ESSENCE." When decomposed they become absorbed into the bosom of God, as the moisture which arises out of the ocean through solar attraction falls back again as rain into the bosom of its parent, and mingles with it into one; or as otherwise described, as sparks that return to their immortal centre and are lost in its effulgence.

"The term Thummim we also trace to the Egyptians.

Diodorus and other writers inform us, that in Egypt the Chief Judge while engaged in listening to the cases brought before him, wore upon his neck, a chain of gold and precious stones; to which was attached a small image of Thmei, the Goddess of Truth and Justice. In Exod. xxviii, 30, it is written, "Thou shalt put on the breastplate of judgment, the Urim and Thummim, and they shall put it on Aaron's heart, when he goeth before the Lord."

"The great Egyptian Goddess who presided over the courts of law, and aided Osiris, also bore the name of Truth, "Thmei;" resembling "Thummim."

The following interesting description is from the "Dublin University Magazine:—

"The Great God Osiris, the Lord of Truth, sits on a lofty throne, wearing a mitre of gold, with long feathers attached to each side and balancing either way. He holds a sceptre, the crozier of authority, and the Tau Cross, or emblem of life; and the flabellum of justice rests upon his shoulders. The mystic serpents are in the canopy above him. His is a mild face, but inexorably calm, as Rhetementi, or judge of the unseen life, of the hidden being. He is the great prototype of the Deity; known to the Greeks as Rhadamanthus. Before the divine judge are placed sin offerings, and near him are seated four mediators, or daimonic geni of the dead. Beneath his footstool is a dark cavern of descent to the world of chastisement. The deceased man holds up his hands in prayer; and is supported by the sister goddesses Isis and Nephthys, the spirits of the upper and the lower heavens, respectively; each wears on her head the emblems of TRUTH. In the front of the judge is the dragon, (the Cerberus of the Greeks) guarding the regions of death; and taking the part of accuser or diabolus. Ranged around the judgment hall are forty-two assessors, whose prerogative it is to examine the prisoner and report; each having a special province and function; a large pair of scales are in the midst, presided over by attendant deities. In one scale is placed the conduct, or character of the deceased; (typified by the heart, or the funeral vase that held it.) In the other is the Ostrich feather, or the figure of the goddess Truth—Thmei, the Greek Termi, the Hebrew Thummim. A small weight is moved along the beam to make a balance, and so determine how much the heart falls short of its standard. HORUS, THE REDEEMER AND DIVINE SON, takes the suppliant shade by the hand and PLEADS HIS MERITS before the calm Osiris. Throth the deity of letters, as recording angel, inscribes on his tablets and presents them before the judge. The door of entrance is guarded, retreat impossible; the trembling creature is before the tribunal of infallibility; with his heart all open to the view, and his every action weighed in the balance! Osiris is president over the judgment, rather than judge; the recorded actions speak for themselves; there was no impugning facts in pure spiritual light; the conscience of the awakened spirit saw itself in the true bill of the jury, and the verdict of the balance."

Let my reader exercise his judgment between the teaching of Moses and that of the Egyptians, and decide for himself, which of them inculcates the purest morality, which is most calculated to make its followers GOOD AND HAPPY; which is the most consistent with reason, justice, truth and mercy, these attributes of the Infinitely Wise, Good and Just, towards all his creatures; and who we believe will reward every man according to his works.

Moses taught nothing respecting a future state of reward and punishments; the promises and penalties of his law were all of a temporal nature. All of them were founded upon the supernatural; which is in direct opposition with the laws of nature; both cannot therefore indicate the will of the Supreme. The moral law was only binding upon Jews towards Jews; they were taught to look upon themselves alone, as God's PECULIAR PEOPLE; and all the rest of mankind as his enemies, with whom they were forbidden to make any "covenant" were commanded to "show them no mercy" and on whom they were authorised to inflict unheard of barbarities. Deu. vii, 1-2, x, 10-17.

## THE CASE STATED.

THERE is a legend extant that the immortal Captain Cuttle dared not trust himself in the charming presence of the pretty widow, Eulalie Anastasia McStinger, lest that tender and captivating woman should have married him in his own despite; and that with a timid discretion, he purposely absented himself from her cosy villa, to avoid being finally conquered. The captain may have possessed physical courage, but, it is apparent, that he had no moral stamina. He was only the type of a pusillanimous class which being deficient in heroic virtue invariably resign what ought to be tenaciously retained. He was, also, representative of a peculiar section of bigots who, rather than incur the risk of conversion, occupy exclusive ground, and obstinately reject all opposing arguments, under deference to the mental slavery that links their credulity to one antiquated but absorbing principle; and there cannot possibly be anything more inimical to freedom of conscience and self-reliance, than a persistent adhesion to crude and tyrannical fallacies, whose only recommendation is that they are the relics of an ancestral and unenlightened period. The eccentric Irishman, who, by confounding to-morrow with yesterday, bequeathed his property to his ancestors, was not a whit more responsible for the sacrifice of his worldly chattels, than the fanatical adherent of modern error is for the future destiny of his imperishable soul, and, they who cherish a delusion and pursue a phantasy, merely because they were early trained to do so, must be either culpably negligent of eternal subjects or arrant cowards to the despotic caprice of a mercenary and designing priesthood. All oligarchies are odious, but especially so are the oligarchies of orthodoxy,—a remnant of the times when men's consciences were coerced by papal tyranny, and led captive by spurious reasoning. The brain-power of the present century is, we are thankful to say, rapidly demolishing the old bulwarks and tottering citadels of rampant superstition, and oppressive intolerance, for, aided by the revelations of science, illuminated by the progress of knowledge, and guided by the effulgence of reason, average humanity now insists upon the full exercise of private judgment and repudiates with scornful contempt the insulting pretensions of dogmatism and bigotry—the vapid ceremonials of an insincere and formal worship—the hateful pride, the pompous ostentation, and the carnal proclivities of an unprofitable and covetous Denominational clique.

If blatant Tooley-street has not run stark mad once more, then we say that we have failed to interpret the signs of the times aright. When William Cowper declared that "the world is full of wrong and outrage," the poet gave utterance to a truism that reflects scandal upon the ecclesiastical element, for, as a tree is known by its fruit, so is preaching to be appraised by its results. The spirit of God is ever active, and is constantly moving, not only over the regions of the land, but likewise upon the surface of the waters, it pervades, sustains, and permeates the universe, both of visible and invisible creation, perpetually exercising its inscrutable influences upon all. But the perversity of single men has sadly blemished the original character of nature; for by the insidious aggressions of wanton hypocrisy, the public mind has been enslaved by dogmas and by formularies, for the exclusive benefit of a capricious order, which originated in the selfishness of the priesthood, and in the ignorance of the people. It has been truly remarked that Christianity—as it is so called—has prevailed for one thousand and eight hundred years, without even so much as making men honest; and, it is the declaration of Max Muller that when a church ceases to proselytise, it ceases to be useful. If then, that observation be applicable to any particular establishment, how much the more so is it applicable to collective Denominations, all of them vain enough to profess themselves to be right, but each bold enough to proclaim that its contemporaries are wrong. Of them, in the aggregate, it may be said in the language of King Richard:—

"My conscience has a hundred several tongues;  
And every tongue brings in a separate tale!"

If we only momentarily contemplate the present chronic condition of society, we shall detect evidences of the baneful effects occasioned by sectarian rivalries, and competitive systems of

theology; which instead of making men wiser and better, only incites religious mania, and leaves both mind and heart unimpressed for good. Class vindictive towards class:—sect wrangling against sect:—Virtue humbled!—Vice rampant—and mankind unreconciled. Surely, when Jesus proclaimed His mission and the primitive apostles espoused it, the herald of the angels was to be "Peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." Alas! what a change has come o'er the ætherealised spirit of an early dream! Where now is that promised peace? and where in these days is that prognosticated goodwill? That earnest genius, Thomas Carlyle, has been long crying out to England to cease her devotion to shams; and we can imagine his appeal to be approaching these colonies, like a still, small, but irrepressible voice traversing the intervening distance. We can hear it. Our fellow colonists may hear it if they listen, and should they do so let us hope that their eyes may become opened to discriminate between the real and the counterfeit. As the ring of metal determines its quality, so do results indicate either the goodness or badness of processes; and it is as formerly, men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. So, by their deeds shall we know them.

In 1862, Dr. Bayley, of Argyle Square Church, King's Cross, London, said to his congregation:—"When we look around at the world and remember that we are in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, the reflection is but a gloomy one. We see war making its awful ravages, yet, as if Jesus had not counselled mankind to love one another. The slave trade even pursued by men, called Christians, and murdering its thousands to bind its hundreds to hopeless ill-requited toil. The great Christian and civilised communities, armed to the teeth, lest each should plunge upon the other like banditti, and gorge their lust of power with pillage and massacre. The internal condition of the Christian kingdoms is equally unsatisfactory; crime rather upon the increase than otherwise; ignorance, not vigorously combated; but, those who should be drying up all its marshes, and rooting out all its weeds, quarrelling about the mode of its being done, and content rather to leave the mind a waste than run the risk of not having it all done by their sect. In the great trading operations of the world, how alarming are the instances of fraud? Here, and there, sad discoveries appal mankind, and these are but symptoms which reveal the workings of the diseases of avarice, of profligacy, and injustice underneath. Superstition still blinds its millions. Talented thousands are still content to fatten by dealing out ancient folly, as if they believed it, while the faithful few, who yearn for better things, cry out. "Lord! how long?" That quotation is as applicable to Australia in 1878, as it was to Europe in 1862. And why is it so? There must be something radically defective in our administrative machinery, and in our theological polity, when the social circle of local humanity is so convulsed by internal discords, so agitated by rancorous proclivities. There cannot be any vitality in a creed, or any virtue in a multiplicity of sects, when they, one and all fail to elevate the mind from nature up to nature's God; when they fail to purify the human heart, and do not convert the wicked. What is the use of preaching platitudes and homilies, so long as no moral advantages are to be practically demonstrated to the masses, to whom all that labor is applied! There must be wolves amongst the flock but disguised by false exteriors; for, were our theologians to be galvanised by spiritual influences, the results would be more gratifying. The reign of humbug is enthralling the people, and some, if not all, of the ecclesiastical faculty might appropriate and re-echo, the confession of the editor of the "Jaalam Independent Blunderbuss:—

"In short, I firmly do believe  
In humbug generally;  
For it is a thing that I perceive  
To hev a solid vally;  
This heth my faithful shepherd been,  
In pasturs sweet heth led me,  
An' this'll keep the people green,  
To feed as they hev fed me."

God grant that our friends of the clergy, when they adopt sacerdotal vestments, and arrogate a sacred function, would



but remember what Dr. Krummacher has written in the concluding pages of his work entitled "Elisha":—"I conjure you, as long as you do not feel a deep and earnest desire to resign yourselves entirely to the Lord, to refrain from using religious expressions, and from appearing devout. Keep to those to whom in your inmost soul you belong. Wear the cockade of the master whom you serve. Put not on the uniform of Christ until He himself calls you to His colours; for Christianity is a tender and heavenly plant, which, when grafted upon a natural stem, produces only the fruit of destruction."

To the preceding passage we consider it advisable to add that there is, at the present time, an active spirit of enquiry pervading the people generally; and that there exist indubitable signs of a popular impatience under the imposition and incubus of old doctrines and absurd ceremonies. We are, all of us, crying with Goethe for "Light! more light!" and are disinclined to accept, without analytical investigation, the doctrines or the dogmas of sect. As Thomas Hood said,

"On Bible stilts we don't affect to stalk,  
Nor lard with scripture our familiar talk."

We are told by Mr. Samson Brass that this is a world that turns upon its own axis, and has lunar influences, and revolutions round heavenly bodies, and various little games of that sort; but we are surprised that the centre of gravity has not, before this, been violently disturbed, in consequence of the fantastic tricks performed by humanity upon its surface. Dean Swift has informed us of the existence of a body of men called "Flapners," whose duty it was to strike the philosophers of Laputa whenever they became so intently absorbed in metaphysics as to be insensible to ordinary objects; but we confess that we were scarcely prepared to hear of a similar custom having been introduced into the theological element of the current century, as witness the following paragraph:—"A Danish newspaper writes that on the 17th May, 1846, King Charles VIII. issued this decree to the diocese of Arhæwd:—'Having been informed that the number of those who go to sleep in church during Divine service is much increasing, we have issued a decree by which every community of the diocese is directed to appoint officers whose duty it will be to perambulate the church and keep the faithful awake. To meet their object these men will carry a long rod, with which they will rap the heads of those who fall asleep.' " So the secret is out at last! Congregations require to be kept wide awake by corporal punishment! And no wonder! For the periodical reiteration of a stereotyped ritual is naturally calculated to exert a soporific influence upon people, who only submit to the ordeal of church-going for the sake of appearances, and because it is considered respectable to conform to custom! What hypocrisy! What downright madness it is to assume a fictitious semblance of sanctity which requires to be kept awake by physical appliances. Talk not to us about the influences for good that such practices will exert; we are not the credulous fools that a designing and covetous oligarchy desire to trifle with and impose upon. Either the theological systems now in operation will be glaring deceptions, or the method of discharging them must be fatally erroneous.

While the principle of payment by results has been adopted by the Education Department, it would be well to apply the like crucial test to our ecclesiastical establishment; and in lieu of appraising a minister's stipend by the number of sermons he may preach, we have an idea that it would be best to estimate their worth according to the number of souls they save. At a synodical meeting of the Presbyterian Church Assembly, held on November 14, 1878, in Melbourne, a report was tabled by the Rev. J. W. Inglis, concerning the prevalence of intemperance in Victoria, which stated that three millions of pounds sterling is annually expended in the colony in intoxicating drinks. We shall not stop to discuss the remedy for such an epidemic, because, as Mark Twain said of the Mexican saddle, 'it is too excruciating a subject for comment;' but we may perhaps be excused for recording an opinion that, should the figures be correct, there is an awful responsibility devolving upon somebody for such a condition of depravity. We by no means insinuate that the sundry religious denominations are accountable for so much immorality, but we certainly think that our licensing laws

might be very advantageously modified. As men, in the fullest acceptation of the title, we say, with Juvenal, that we cannot but be interested in what concerns mankind; and consequently, without adopting the vapid style of a Puritanical and ostentatious remonstrance, we courteously ask the clergy of all sects to co-operate for a mitigation of this and other evils.

#### MRS. E. H. BRITTEN.

MRS. BRITTEN is still meeting with great success in Sydney. She is lecturing three times a week to excellent houses, the Sunday evening lectures at the Theatre Royal being full to overflowing. One of the Sydney papers devotes upwards of a column to her lecture on the "New Bible," and from another we extract the following:—

MRS. HARDINGE BRITTEN.—This lady lectured as usual on Sunday, at the Theatre Royal, to an immense audience, which filled every part of the building. Her orations are so brilliant, and so grandly delivered, that even those who have no sympathy with her religious views flock eagerly to hear her, and having once heard her, do not fail to return again. We refer our readers to our advertising columns for information as to Mrs. Britten's next lecture.

As Mrs. Britten is willing to pay Melbourne another visit before returning to America, there is little doubt but that arrangements will be made for her to deliver a series of lectures here in the early part of 1879.

#### MELBOURNE PROGRESSIVE LYCEUM.

For a considerable time past, much inconvenience has been experienced and the growth of the Lyceum retarded for want of room in the Masonic Hall, where its sessions have hitherto been held. The difficulty in remedying this has been the impossibility of obtaining a sufficiently central building adapted to the requirements at a moderate rent. That difficulty has at length been overcome. The recent performance at Lowe's Rooms in aid of the Lyceum funds drew attention to the suitability of that building, and negotiations were soon after entered into which resulted in the hall being secured for the Lyceum. A committee of taste, consisting of Messrs. Lang, Deakin, and Walker were appointed, and through their exertions the appearance of the hall has been materially improved by the addition of panels and medallion views in colors arranged upon the walls, and preparations were made for a grand opening session on November 17th. On the Saturday preceding a number of Lyceum members and officers assembled at the room, those who had gardens bringing flowers with them, with which, supplemented by a large supply of flowers and evergreens sent by Mr. Lang, they proceeded to decorate the hall. On Sunday morning it presented a very gay appearance, the Lyceum mustered to the number of 150, and there were about the same number of visitors present when the session began. Mr. Lang opened the session with an appropriate invocation, followed by golden and silver chain recitations and songs; after which Mr. Terry led the musical calisthenics, and in these the advantage of the new hall was particularly manifest, the increased space obviating the previous confusion incidental to the arrangement of groups, and enabling the members to execute their parts with freedom and energy, Mr. Deakin delivered an instructive address, briefly reviewing the progress of the Lyceum since his connexion with it, and after some facetious remarks in reference to the committee of taste, pointed with some pride to the result of their labors. He then proceeded to explain the significance of the pictures on the wall. Lessons were drawn by him from the lives of Washington, Franklin, Scott, Burns, Milton, and Shakespeare, and from the more classical figures and pictures which complete the decorations. After a brief interval, Mr. Deakin again took the platform and directed a series of ornamental marching, which were well performed by the Lyceum. A short song brought the proceedings to a close. As "Lowe's Rooms" are not well known to the general public, we may mention that they are situated in Stephen-street, one door south of Collins-street.

## MR. WALKER'S LECTURES

THE Victorian Association of Spiritualists having succeeded in leasing the Academy of Music from Mr. Aarons for thirteen consecutive Sundays, their platform has been transferred from the Princess' to that elegant and central theatre. Mr. Walker gave his opening lecture there to a large audience on Sunday, November 24th, the subject, "The Resurrection and the Life to Come," forming an excellent basis for a Spiritualistic discourse, which the lecturer did ample justice to. He appealed to reason and scripture against the idea of a physical resurrection, and presented some beautiful pictures of the after-life, showing its naturalness, and adaptability to the requirements of the arisen soul. At the close of the lecture several questions were asked and satisfactorily answered. During the past month it was determined by the Association that a little missionary work should be done, and Mr. Walker having expressed his willingness to co-operate in this laudable object, he has been engaged in missions to the people of Brunswick, Richmond, and Emerald Hill. He will respond to calls to lecture in any accessible district where spiritual light is needed, or is prepared to meet any representative clergyman in friendly discussion on Christianity or Spiritualism.

## AN INDEPENDENT PAPER.

The Sydney *Life* gives a full report of a special seance which a representative of their paper and a friend had with Mr. Baldwin, in which the former describes the *modus operandi* of Baldwin's imitation of C. Foster's phase of mediumship. The following editorial is in reference to the report:

EXPOSURE OF SPIRITUALISM.—In another column will be found an article by Mr. H. W. H. Stephen on the exposure of Spiritualism by Professor Baldwin. Some unthinking people have taken exception to the course we have pursued with reference to this unpopular movement, contending that we should not have permitted the advocates of Spiritualism to make use of our columns for the purpose of propagating their theories. Well, we are satisfied that we have made no mistake. Spiritualism has obtained such a footing that the time has come when it is no longer possible to pass it over with contempt. It may suit priest-ridden journals like the *Herald* to adopt such a course, but we conceive it to be our duty, not being by any means priest-ridden, to forward enquiry in this matter. It is quite time that the question were definitely settled, and this it cannot be without the fullest publicity is given to the arguments on both sides. The performances of Professor Baldwin have afforded the *Herald* an excellent opportunity for abuse of Spiritualism, but we failed to see how, even if Mr. Baldwin's pretensions were all verified, there can therefrom be deduced any argument against Spiritualism. Because he can do certain things after one fashion, it does not follow that others may not have other ways of doing them. The feelings of disgust engendered by a perusal of the feeble and malicious attack of the *Herald*, have made us anxious to help the injured, and therefore we have not hesitated, and shall not hesitate, to give them such opportunity for righting themselves as is at our disposal. Mr. Stephen has hitherto occupied such a position on this journal that he could do as he liked in this connection, but he must be credited with never having lent the authority of the paper to his peculiar views. The course he initiated we shall follow; studiously abstaining from any expression of opinion until we are in a position to speak authoritatively.

Since Dr. Slade's return from Ballarat, the pressure of Parliamentary business has prevented two of the members of the investigating committee's attendance, and consequently no further sittings have been held. At the request of several who had not the opportunity of seeing him when last there, he has paid a second visit to Ballarat, and is holding successful seances and diagnosing disease at Lester's Hotel. He will probably return to Melbourne next week, when the committee sittings will be got through as quickly as possible. In another column we reprint an account of one of his Sandhurst seances.

## JOTTINGS ON PASSING EVENTS.

By LAMBDA.

THE controversy on eternal punishment now raging in the theological world, excited chiefly by Canon Farrar's eloquent addresses on "Eternal Hope," should certainly point a moral which sensible people will not be slow to apprehend. Mr. John Tyerman, in a lecture on "Hell," referring to a discussion that had arisen on this subject between three representative men in England, says:—"The Rev. Dr. Angus contended for the eternity of future punishment. He had a splendid array of texts to prove that the wicked will be *imprisoned, devoured, burnt, and beaten* in hell for ever. Bringing such a tremendous biblical battery to bear upon the position of his enemies, his fellow Christians of course thought he completely demolished it. The Rev. R. Jukes maintained the Restorationist theory. For his more reasonable and humane view he, too, could quote chapter and verse by the score. He marshalled Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Christ himself before him, and made them do capital service against the popular position defended by Dr. Angus. And his friends were confident, amid the smoke and din of battle, that his roaring artillery had shattered the fortress of eternal hell into a million fragments, and blown Dr. Angus into heaven. The Rev. E. White took up the Destructionist ground. The Bible was so simple and clear that a child could understand it, though his reverend brethren, Angus and Jukes, had in some unaccountable way missed its meaning. . . . His brother Destructionists unanimously awarded him the victor's wreath at the end of the paper war." In our own city a similar controversy has, in time past, been carried on, The Revs. Henderson, Wollaston, and Boake representing Angus, Jukes, and White respectively. What a pity these gentlemen, these "stewards of God's mysteries," and the thousands they represent, cannot agree as to what the Bible—"God's only revelation to man"—really does teach regarding the final fate of their fellow mortals and themselves.

Turning over some back numbers of the *Southern Cross* I encountered a most edifying sample of Christian piety. A contributor to that journal signing himself "J. B.," finding the waters of his affection for his Saviour welling up within him and overflowing their normal limits, yet whose genius failed to evolve in poetic garb a stanza that might express the intensity of his emotion, has resorted to the not altogether exceptional plan of adopting the words of another without acknowledging his indebtedness. "J. B." wrests from its context, and distorts to suit his own purpose, the beautiful poem entitled "The Star of Hope," given through the mediumship of Mrs. Conant, and published in the *Banner of Light* for 18th August, 1866, also in "Flashes of Light from the Spirit Land," pp. 26-7. My limited space will not permit me to place in juxtaposition the original and the honest adaptation, but I must refer my readers to the *Southern Cross* for 4th May, 1878. To the sin of interpolation and garbling, "J. B." adds that of imposition, for he seeks to palm off as his own original composition a poem which he has deliberately plagiarised. The following are some of "J. B.'s" *evangelical* "improvements":—"Jesus, Thou Son of Hope," for Mrs. Conant's "Bright Star of Hope;" "In mercy sweet," for "Through Nature's bowers;" "Where the redeemed abide," for "Where loving friends abide;" and "By Thine unerring ray" for "By truth's unerring ray."

Such is the Christianity which is too *pious* to be honest!

The Church, despite the restrictions which it places upon free thought and individuality, through all the centuries has been, and still is, the home of many noble, clear-sighted minds, who behold, away beyond the rugged headlands of theology, the still and peaceful waters of religious truth. Prominent among such men are Dean Stanley of England and Charles Strong of Melbourne. Of the latter I will say nothing beyond recommending all who can to go and hear him. Dr. Stanley's writings are well known, but probably in none does he appear to greater advantage than in his recently published "Addresses and Sermons, delivered at St. Andrew's" The following brief quotation from it will give a clue to the



character of the book:—"A clearer glimpse into the nature of the Deity was granted to Spinoza, the excommunicated Jew of Amsterdam, than to the combined forces of Episcopacy and Presbytery in the Synod of Dordrecht." Let me commend it to all who would read a work that is reverential, rational, and truly Catholic in sentiment, spirit, and expression.

What a strange old fossil must be the Rev. Mr. Gardner of Queenscliff. According to the *Telegraph's* report of his speech at a recent meeting of the Presbyterian Assembly, he affirmed "that the greatest reverence should be paid to the Sabbath. . . . he would never even bathe on Sunday, although he did so every other morning in the week all the year round." It is to be hoped that Mr. Gardner is unique in his sentiments, or otherwise the Sabbath will come to be regarded as a day when men should abstain from their ablutions and go about, not *crying*, but *being* "unclean, unclean!" Clearly, Mr. Gardner belongs back to the age of the Puritans.

### PROFESSOR ZOLLNER AND DR. SLADE.

Under the title of "Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen," Herr Zöllner, professor of physical astronomy at Liepsic University, has published a work in which he records some marvellous seances with Dr. Slade. He relates the following as an instance which occurred in the presence of himself and Professor W. Webber. What will Lankester and Donkin have to say to it? "I pasted half a sheet of ordinary writing-paper on a rather large wooden Board, blackened the paper by holding it over a petroleum lamp, and then laid it under the table at which W. Webber, Slade, and I had taken our places. In the hope that we might, as on the previous day, obtain the impression of a hand, we immediately directed our attention to the magnetic experiment. Suddenly the board under the table was violently shoved out about a yard, and when I lifted it up, there was upon it the impression of a naked left foot. I at once asked Slade to stand up and show me both his feet. He willingly agreed. After he had pulled his shoe off, his stocking was examined to see if there was any soot upon it, but nothing was found. He was then asked to have his foot measured, and the length of the impression was found to exceed that of his foot by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  centimetres." The professor, anxious to find confirmation for his theory of the existence of four dimensional beings, asked Slade to try whether an impression could not be obtained inside a closed book-slate. He had previously bought a book-slate, pasted a half-sheet of letter-paper inside, and blackened it with the lamp, and here is his description of the result:—"I closed this slate, and remarked to Slade that if my theory of the existence of intelligent four-dimensional bodies in nature were well founded, it would be easy for them to give the impression hitherto obtained on an open slate inside a closed one. Slade laughed, and was of opinion that this would be absolutely impossible; even his 'spirits' whom he asked, seemed very much perplexed about this proposition, but at last answered on a slate with the cautious stereotyped reply, *We will try it*. To my great surprise, Slade agreed that I should lay the book-slate (which since I had blackened the paper I had not once let go out of my hands) during the seance upon my knees, so that I could always see half of it. We had been sitting perhaps five minutes at the table in a brightly-lighted room, our hands linked with those of Slade upon the table in the usual manner, when I felt twice, at short intervals, that the slate upon my knees was pressed down without the slightest visible cause. Three knocks on the table announced that all was finished, and when I opened the slate, I found inside on one side the print of a right, and on the other of a left foot, the latter the same as we had obtained the two previous evenings. My readers may judge for themselves how far it is for us, after such facts, to look upon Mr. Slade as a deceiver, or a trickster. Slade's own astonishment at the success of the experiment was almost greater than mine."

### SPIRIT MEDIUMS AND CONJURORS.

It was not our intention to have directly noticed the conjuring entertainment now taking place at St. George's Hall, but on Monday last an imitation of Dr. Slade's slate writing having been announced, we felt it incumbent upon us to be present, on public grounds, to enable us to denote the difference between the real and fictitious phenomena. Being called upon by several to join the committee, we acceded, and assisted in tying the performers for the cabinet trick, which was cleverly performed, though wanting in much which distinguished the Davenport seances.

Our interest, however, was centred in the slate writing, which we waited patiently for, and in due time the table and slates made their appearance on the stage. They were placed on the opposite side to where the committee were seated, one of their number, Mr. A. P. Martin, being requested by Mr. Baldwin to sit with him at the table, a small cedar one, with flaps, which, when closed, fitted into slots or recesses, and when opened left a ledge nearly an inch wide. The sitter (Mr. Martin) was placed with his knees between the close legs of the table, about 16 inches apart, Mr. Baldwin sitting near the corner of the table to his left. The slates used were very small, about 6 x 8, outside measure. After cleaning both sides of one and one side of the other, and exhibiting the clean one to Mr. M., Mr. Baldwin placed it with a small piece of pencil under the table, holding it close up and scratching it with his nail, he desired Mr. Martin to listen to the writing, which the latter said he heard. One or two taps were given with the slate in imitation of raps, and then with the right hand, the left being still on the table, Mr. B. fixed the slate in the slot in a slanting position, and, taking the pencil in his fingers, deliberately wrote a line on it: he then released it and passed it up on to the table with the words "We have come," on it. This performance he repeated, with a little variation, and he then proposed to try the double slate. A grain of pencil was placed on the clean slate, and the other, with the ready written message put over it. It was then placed under the table, Mr. Martin being allowed to hold one end of it. After a little scratching with the finger-nail, the long-written message was produced. Mr. Baldwin stated to the audience that this was what Dr. Slade charged a guinea for, and made several other glaring misstatements in reference to that gentleman.

We waited for the finish, and then arising from our seat on the platform, intimated to the audience our desire to correct some of the misstatements made, we invited anyone present to accompany us from the hall direct to Dr. Slade's room, for the purpose of examining his table, which had no slot or rest for the slate. We gave Mr. Baldwin credit for having produced a fair imitation of the Davenport performances, but pronounced the slate writing business a miserable travesty of Dr. Slade's seances; that, besides there being no slot in the table, the slates used by Dr. Slade were much larger, were almost invariably brought by the sitters, and were frequently filled with writing.

Mr. Winter, of the *Herald*, then rose and said that he and a fellow pressman had attended three seances of Dr. Slade's, and considered Professor Baldwin's *exposé* of the slate writing a fair duplication of what he had witnessed.

Mr. Baldwin said the discussion could not be continued, but offered to discuss physical phenomena with ourselves or anyone else on Sunday evening; or to make a series of bets against Dr. Slade's doing certain things proposed by him, concluding by quoting an Americanism, which he considered appropriate, viz., "Put up, or shut up." As Dr. Slade was absent from Melbourne, the alternative was necessarily accepted, and the talking ended.

After the performance, Mr. Winter asked if we had any objection to let Mr. Baldwin see the table, and, accompanied by two other gentlemen, we conducted them to Dr. Slade's room for this purpose, and proved that the table was not a trick one. Baldwin, however, suggested that the brace running across the middle of the table would serve to support the slate. On being re-

quested to demonstrate this, he declined unless paid; and, using offensive language in reference to Dr. S., we were under the necessity of cautioning him against its repetition on our premises.

Since then he has been publishing personal challenges to Dr. Slade, though aware that that gentleman is not in Melbourne. Our own opinion is, that if he were so, he would treat Baldwin's challenges with contempt. The verdict of the judicial committee, for whom he has been sitting, is of infinitely more importance than that of a professed conjuror, who would not be likely to confess himself beaten under any circumstances.

### THE USE AND ABUSE OF RELIGION.

The Sydney *Life* of November 6th has an excellent article on the "Use and Abuse of Religion," from which we extract the following:—

The use of Religion has been erroneously supposed to be the preparation of man to enter into the life of the hereafter. We say "erroneously," because a marked line of distinction has been drawn between life in this world and life in the next, whereas the two existences are but one, and the soul's pilgrimage upon earth is only the beginning of a career through eternity, which, for aught we know to the contrary, may consist of a series of breaks similar to that called death.

Vital Religion recognises the fact that man should seek from the earliest dawn to prepare himself for the morrow—quite as assiduously as for the remoter future. Religion of this kind is useful beyond all else as a civilising element; in this contrasting most distinctly with the Religion of the past, which has never recognised intellectual progress as necessary for the soul's advancement.

The use of Religion is to teach man his daily duty, and to encourage him to fulfil it.

The abuse of Religion is the war of creeds and the fostering of dissension.

No scheme of moral advancement is susceptible of proof of inspired origin which involves dispute and discord. It is impossible to believe that the Deity could be pleased by witnessing such exhibitions of intolerance as are of such common occurrence in what are called religious circles. God, having gifted man with a finite intellect, would not expect from him absolute correctness of conclusions in matters where the Infinite is concerned. He recognises no distinctions of sects. He wants no creed, no forms, no ceremonies. He demands from His creatures merely that they will live together in brotherly love, helping one another, and cultivating to the best advantage those faculties with which He has gifted them. The highest religion in His eyes is the religion of tolerance, and prayers for forgiveness are but as idle murmurs to Him, if accompanied by Pharisaical self-congratulations and denunciations of different sects.

### SLATE WRITING EXTRAORDINARY.

At a meeting of the Ballarat Psychological Association, held on Wednesday evening, November 6th, the following beautiful invocation was written between two new school slates held in Dr. Slade's right hand on the top of the head of one of the members, and visible to all present, who at the same time distinctly heard the sound of the writing. When the slates were opened the writing formed a circle (or oval) extending over both of them, so that as each semicircle was completed, the pencil must have been reversed for the second half to be written on the opposite side:—

"Oh! Spirit of Truth, Wisdom, and Power, may the world know that not one of thy children is denied the blessed privilege of communing with the spirit world. Oh! may the inhabitants of earth no longer debar themselves of this privilege of looking into what they call the mysteries of heaven. We wish to cast aside the veil of darkness and error which has hidden this truth from their sight. We thank thee, oh! Divine Principal of Truth, that thy truth is for all thy children of earth. We know, oh!

Father, that thy powerful arm will encircle this little band that are so true and faithful in this glorious work—blessing human souls. Dear friends, be true to your work, as I am true to you. I am, Rev. G. Wilson."

A photograph of the slates and writing may be seen at our office.

### A SCEPTIC'S DEATH SONG.

How sweet, how freshly cool is the air  
As the evening chases the heated day,  
So the toils and sorrows in life we bear,  
Our parting moments disperse away;  
For the web of earth is a tangled woof,  
Dim, woven by men from weeping and care;  
So carry me free from the darkening roof,  
'Neath the mighty mantle the mountains wear.  
Quick, bear me out for my time draws near,  
While the golden heavens are all aglow,  
For I no longer must linger here  
I am tired and weary, and fain would go.  
I fain would go, for I never feel  
The thrilling throb that the poets sing,  
Should hasten the pulses in life's one spring.  
But a sorrowful truth is my fading youth,  
With only the bitter no time can heal,  
No thought can scatter no joy can heal;  
A bird with a broken heart and wing  
That far from home the wild winds fling.  
A blossom blighted while in the bud,  
Or waked to life amidst Winter's chill,  
A leper that's tainted in the blood,  
A broken branch on a foaming flood,  
A butterfly in a rippling rill  
Drifted down to the ruthless mill.  
I have lived my life, I have struck my stroke,  
The life is fading the stroke but failed,  
For my breath was stifled in custom's cloak,  
While evil's head was too strongly mailed,  
My poor weak weapon in fragments broke,  
All helpless and bleeding at last I woke;  
But never surrendered, and never quailed,  
Tho' faith had vanished and hope had paled,  
And all beyond earth was in darkness veiled.  
I shuddering stood as my bright dreams sank,  
And the dreary wilderness stood revealed  
Which the fire of youth had at first concealed:  
Then caught up life's goblet and wildly drank,  
And lifted my hands and struck from the bank;  
In the whirl of fate's stream as the thunder pealed.  
I was drifted along in a wild dismay,  
By the rapids of pain and the desert despair;  
But saw no land that was, fair or gay,  
I rested not, but pursued my way  
Wherever the mind of man might dare;  
But the garment of joy was a gilded pall,  
And hollow and bitter all earthly fare,  
No truth! no love, all glitter and glare:  
The waters of life were bitter as gall,  
And now I am sweeping o'er death's dark fall.  
I view my end with a cheerful eye,  
I pass without fear to the unknown land,  
Tho' scorning to flee by my own faint hand;  
I meet it calmly and gladly die,  
To obtain soft rest for the groan and sigh,  
Or join another and nobler band,—  
The future of man, we may not understand.  
I feel the tumult that gathers within,  
I know at last that my hour draws nigh,  
And my pulses quicken my heart beats high,  
With its last great gush as I drown life's din  
I see beyond the failing of sin,  
I see the future in glory lie.



In this last dim moment the veil is rent,  
I pierce thro' the wondrous winding maze,  
I see the vision of far-off days :  
When the ills of time are in peace all spent,  
When Man and Nature in one are blent,  
Both chanting a chorus of heartfelt praise.

When each is all, and when all are one,  
All gaily bound in the bonds of love,  
The lion and lamb with the eagle and dove,  
The earth beneath and the heavens above ;  
While the months all mirthful in melody run,  
As the glad earth circles the golden sun.

When man ennobled can rule himself,  
While nature bows to his fond control,  
When he, disdaining the worship of self  
Shall blend with the Universal Soul,  
And singing again the spheres shall roll,  
In grandeur towards the inscrutable goal !

See ! the sun is now setting, and crimson and gold,  
The rays of his glory in colour unfold,  
I am sinking with him, and though flesh travaillet,  
Am transfigured with splendor that catches my breath ;  
Ah ! the glow and the beauty is all passing by,  
For now death is on me and thrills thro' my veins ;  
Let me stand with my last look thrown up to the sky,  
Erect and unshadowed I've lived and I'll die !  
'Tis the bursting of bonds, 'tis the breaking of chains,  
'Tis the farewell of sorrow, the fleeting of pains ;  
Night and sleep you are welcome, but faith still disdains  
Its load, and ascends from my losses and gains,  
I fall in the front rank not fearing, nor fly,  
Though fading in darkness my deeds will not die.

ISHMAEL.

## CLAIRVOYANCE AND PSYCHOGRAPHY.

(From the *Physiological Review*.)

### A DIALOGUE BETWEEN PHYSICUS AND PSYCHICUS.

Phys.—Well, Psychicus, I have been to your medium and got what you said I would. I bought two new slates, placed one on the other with a bit of slate-pencil between, bored holes through the four wooden borders forming the frame, tied the slates firmly together, then took them in my overcoat pocket to the room of Mr. C. E. Watkins, the medium.

Psy.—You were fortunate if, under such stringent conditions, you got anything satisfactory.

Phys.—“Write down some names of deceased friends,” said Watkins, “and I will go out of the room while you do it.” He did so. On ten slips of paper, about the length and breadth of my little finger, I wrote ten names, then rolled up the slips into little pellets, wetted them so as to compress them more closely, and then mixed them up on the table.

Psy.—You are quite sure that there was no one behind your chair, or in some corner, watching you?

Phys.—Nonsense! I was alone in the room. There was no possible, no conceivable chance for my being tricked. Enter Watkins. “Now,” said I to myself, “if he can tell me correctly what is written on one of those pellets, it may be merely a good guess. If he can tell me what is on two pellets in succession, it will be something more than a guess; and if he will tell me what is on six in succession, I will confess that seeing and reading without physical eyes is a genuine phenomenon.”

Psy.—Say you so? You, who yesterday declared that your senses could not make you believe what your reason contradicted! You, who up to yesterday maintained that Huxley and Tyndall were perfectly right in refusing to investigate the imposture! You, who applauded Lankester for unmasking that miserable trickster, Slade! You, who declared that Carpenter had crushed out the whole contemptible brood of delusions.

Phys.—Go on. Perhaps I am not disposed to eat as many of my words as you may imagine. Perhaps there may be ways and means of accounting for—

Psy.—O, yes. For example, Watkins told you correctly what was written on six of those pellets; did he not?

Phys.—You have hit the fact exactly.

Psy.—And are you quite sure that he did not unfold each pellet and read the name before giving it?

Phys.—He did not even touch one of the pellets with his fingers. He touched them each only with a long slate-pencil. I myself unfolded every pellet, and read the name after he announced it.

Psy.—Ah, yes. Simple mind-reading. A motion in your brain created a corresponding motion in his, and the thought came up. Purely physical after all!

Phys.—You know better than that; he could not have got his knowledge from my brain, because the pellets were all mixed, and I did not know what was written on any particular one as they lay unopened.

Psy.—But you knew what was written on all the pellets taken together.

Phys.—I prithee do not mock me, fellow-student; you well know that by no doctrine of chances could the medium have picked from my brain six times in succession the right names. Have done with this chaffing.

Psy.—Go on with your story.

Phys.—Well, my dear fellow, I confess that I was astounded. In a flash the incredulity of my whole career in physics was shrivelled and annihilated. Can it be, I thought, that Carpenter is a pretender to negative knowledge which he never had?

Psy.—You will find that Carpenter is not the only pretender. Look at the Beards, the Hammonds, and others, who have been writing books to prove that what your senses affirmed was merely an epileptic delusion. Are you subject to epilepsy, my dear boy? Has your stepmother a cousin who was an epileptic? Does not Carpenter tell us that we must not allow our senses to contradict our common sense?

Phys.—If you do not stop all this jibing, I will drop the subject.

Psy.—Don't do that, I shall be meek and attentive.

Phys.—Well, my friend, I was so overwhelmed with amazement that I forgot all about the principal object of my visit, which was to get the slate-writing. “Am I psychologised?” I said to myself. “Surely no. My pulse doth temperately keep time. The sun streams in at the window. I have eaten of no insane root. There is no smell of chloroform in the room. I have not been dining out. I am a water-drinker.” And so the theory that I was psychologised would not serve me.

Psy.—You began to think that the babes and simpletons might be right after all, did you not?

Phys.—Not so fast, Psychicus, I am still in a maze, my thoughts are in a ferment, and I must wait till they settle.

Psy.—Perhaps a fresh egg or a little isinglass would help.

Phys.—Since you are in a facetious mood, let us defer the rest of my narrative.

Psy.—By no means; I am all attention. Proceed.

Phys.—I now thought of my slates. Could it be that while I was in a state of unconsciousness, Watkins took these tied slates out of my pocket and wrote on them? “Have you any objection to leaving the room for five minutes?” I said. “None at all,” he replied. Left alone, I drew forth my slates, untied them, saw that all the surfaces were clean, then re-tied them, with the bit of pencil between, and waited the appearance of the medium.

Psy.—What were your private reflections during that interval?

Phys.—Well, to be frank, they were these: What a dunce I have been making of myself these ten years, by raving against these phenomena without having looked into them.

Psy.—Good! After that honest confession you will feel better.

Phys.—None of your moral sentiments, Mr. Surface, if you please! Watkins came in, and consented to the trial with the tied slates. I held them out in my left hand. He seemed to be under great nervous excitement, and writhed as if in pain. Five minutes—ten minutes—passed, and there was no sign. “I must hold

those slates," said he, in an exhausted tone. "Not yet, my good fellow! Try, try again! Don't you remember the old song?" "O, yes, I learnt it at school," said he, with a smile, his mind evidently diverted from its strain for a moment; and just during that moment when "expectation" had been driven out, there was a sound of writing, which his ear caught, and jumping up, he cried, "They've done it."

Psy.—And you are satisfied that he never touched the slates?

Phys.—I have omitted nothing in my account. If he had touched the slates, I should have told you. I again asked him to quit the room. He did so. I untied the slates, and there, on the surface of the under one, was a letter of fifty words, signed with the name of a deceased friend, which name I had not written down nor spoken.

Psy.—Did the handwriting resemble your friend's?

Phys.—Not much, and yet it was not wholly unlike it. I compared it afterwards with the medium's own chirography, and saw a resemblance to that, though not an exact one.

Psy.—That is a curious circumstance. Does it not have a bearing on the theory that it is by his own spiritual organism that he accomplishes the writing?

Phys.—You forget that I am a novice, and that your speculations are new to me.

Psy.—Well, was there anything in the letter that gave evidence of identity?

Phys.—There was nothing to prove it or to disprove it. It struck me that if I had been a disembodied spirit, anxious to make myself known to a friend, I could have hit upon something that would have carried a conviction of identity. But the letter began thus: "You see, after all, that there is something in it."

Psy.—Did that awaken no association? Was your friend a spiritualist?

Phys.—(after a pause).—Now I think of it, the last time we met we had a little discussion on the subject of Spiritualism, and at parting he said, "Depend upon it, there is something in it." And I distinctly remember shouting out to him as he walked away, "Yes, there is humbug in it—trickery in it!"

Psy.—And so the sentence on the slate was really a sequel to your last uttered words, if that was your last parting with your friend.

Psy.—I have told you that the conversation occurred the last time we met.

Psy.—Good! So after all there *was* something in it?

Phys.—So it would seem.

Psy.—But you say that sorrowfully, my friend.

Phys.—Do I? Well, it ought not to be said in sorrow. Look you, Psychicus, these double phenomena—mental and physical—proving incontestably the stunning fact of clairvoyance—proving also the fact of intelligent writing executed either by some force, unknown to science, or by some hand, invisible to our senses, and unimpeded by material obstructions,—am I a stock or a stone to be unaffected by them?

(To be continued.)

#### MR. HUGHES IN REPLY.

WE have received a long letter from Mr. Hughes, traversing our criticism of his former one, but its length and the absence of new argument in it prevent our finding space for it. Mr. Hughes characterises our statement that Spiritualism is a "rational" system of religion as an assumption, but we still aver that a religion which binds you to accept nothing but what commends itself to the reason is essentially a rational religion. He asserts that there are only two positions to be taken with regard to the testimony, either to accept or reject. We can conceive of a third one, which, deeming the evidence inadequate for conviction, would, without rejecting it, consider the case "not proven."

We would not wish to reflect upon the clearness of Mr. Hughes' perceptions, but for him to fail to see, as he asserts he does, any difference between the unsupported recorded testimony of a score of individuals who lived some thousands of years ago, and the direct testi-

\* This is no fancy sketch. The incidents of this dialogue occurred in substance as related.

mony of (say only) a thousand living witnesses, appears to us the height of obtuseness.

It appears, however, that Mr. Hughes does not dispute the alleged facts, and provisionally accepts the phenomena, but objects to their spiritual origin. How is it possible, we would ask, for us or others to convince him if he will not accept testimony. If he desires conviction, there is no way to obtain it but by personal effort.

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